

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A medical instrument comprising:
a tubular member;
an elongate member disposed at least partially inside said tubular member; and
a resilient loop of a first size attached to one end of said elongate member, said loop including a bend on a side of said loop opposite said elongate member, said loop further including two loop sections each extending between said elongate member and said bend, at least one of said loop sections being formed with at least one notch or dent for enabling a use of said loop in at least one second size smaller than said first size upon a positioning of said loop by moving said elongate member and said tubular member relative to one another so that said notch or dent is disposed at a mouth opening of said tubular member.
2. The instrument defined in claim 1 wherein each of said loop sections is formed with a respective notch or dent for enabling use of said loop in said second size upon a positioning of said loop relative to said tubular member so that said notches or dents are disposed at said mouth opening of said tubular member.
3. The instrument defined in claim 2 wherein the notches or dents are disposed at substantially the same first distance from said one end of said elongate member and substantially the same second distance from said bend.
4. The instrument defined in claim 3 wherein said first distance is approximately 30% to approximately 40% of the sum of said first distance and said second distance.

5. The instrument defined in claim 4 wherein each of said notches or dents includes a pair of linear segments connected to one another by an arcuate bight, said segments being disposed at an angle of approximately 80° to approximately 120° relative to one another.

6. The instrument defined in claim 5 wherein said bend is part of a nose projection of said loop, each of said loop sections including a respective bend disposed between said nose projection and the respective one of said notches or dents.

7. The instrument defined in claim 6 wherein the respective bends in said loop sections are located at approximately the same distance from said nose projection so that said loop is provided with an enlarged distal end portion.

8. The instrument defined in claim 7, further comprising a pouch slidably attached to said loop.

9. The instrument defined in claim 8 wherein said loop is made of an electrically conductive material for cauterizing organic tissues of a patient.

10. The instrument defined in claim 2 wherein the notch or dent of each one of said loop sections extends toward the other loop section.

11. The instrument defined in claim 2 wherein said loop lies in a single plane, said notches or dents being located in said plane.

12. The instrument defined in claim 2 wherein said loop has a relaxed configuration wherein said loop sections are spaced from one another by a loop width, each of said notches or dents having a width dimension measured in a direction from the respective loop section towards the other loop section, said width dimension being no larger than approximately fifteen percent of said loop width.

13. The instrument defined in claim 2 wherein said notches or dents each have a V shape.

14. The instrument defined in claim 1, further comprising a pouch slidably attached to said loop.

15. The instrument defined in claim 14 wherein said loop is made of an electrically conductive material for cauterizing organic tissues of a patient.

16. The instrument defined in claim 1 wherein said one of said loop sections is curved in a fully expanded configuration of said loop, the other of said loop sections being straight in said fully expanded configuration of said loop.

17. The instrument defined in claim 1 wherein said notch or dent is one of a plurality of notches or dents formed along said one of said loop sections.

18. The instrument defined in claim 1 wherein said notch or dent is located at a first distance from said one end of said elongate member and a second distance from said bend, said first distance being approximately 30% to approximately 40% of the sum of said first distance and said second distance.

19. The instrument defined in claim 1 wherein said notch or dent includes a pair of linear segments connected to one another by an arcuate bight, said segments being disposed at an angle of approximately 80° to approximately 120° relative to one another.

20. The instrument defined in claim 1 wherein said bend is a first bend, said one of said loop sections including a second bend disposed between said first bend and said notch or dent, said second bend being concave towards the other of said loop sections.

21. The instrument defined in claim 1 wherein said loop lies in a single plane, said notch or dent being located in said plane.

22. The instrument defined in claim 1 wherein said loop has a relaxed configuration wherein said loop sections are spaced from one another by a loop width, said notch or dent having a width dimension measured in a direction from said one of said loop sections towards the other of said loop sections, said width dimension being no larger than approximately fifteen percent of said loop width.

23. The instrument defined in claim 1 wherein said notch or dent has a V shape.

24. The instrument defined in claim 1 further comprising a pouch attached to said loop, said loop defining a mouth opening of said pouch.

25. A medical instrument comprising:

a tubular member;

an elongate member disposed at least partially inside said tubular member; and

a resilient loop of a first size attached to one end of said elongate member, said loop including a nose projection on a side of said loop opposite said elongate member, said loop further including two loop sections each extending between said elongate member and said nose projection, each of said loop sections being formed with at least one respective notch or dent for enabling a use of said loop in at least one second size smaller than said first size upon a positioning of said loop by moving said elongate member and said tubular member relative to one another so that said notches or dents are disposed at a mouth opening of said tubular member, each of said loop sections being formed, at a position between said nose projection and the respective notch or dent with a bend that is concave in a direction generally facing the other loop section, so that said loop is widest along a line extending from the bend in one of said loop sections to the bend in the other of said loop sections.

26. The instrument defined in claim 25 wherein the notches or dents are disposed at substantially the same first distance from said one end of said elongate member and substantially the same second distance from said nose projection.

27. The instrument defined in claim 26 wherein said first distance is approximately 30% to approximately 40% of the sum of said first distance and said second distance.

28. The instrument defined in claim 25, further comprising a pouch slidably attached to said loop.

29. The instrument defined in claim 28 wherein said loop is made of an electrically conductive material for cauterizing organic tissues of a patient.

30. The instrument defined in claim 25 wherein the notch or dent in a given one of said loop sections is one of a plurality of notches or dents formed along said given one of said loop sections.

31. The instrument defined in claim 25 wherein each of said notches or dents includes a pair of linear segments connected to one another by an arcuate bight, said segments being disposed at an angle of approximately 80° to approximately 120° relative to one another.

32. The instrument defined in claim 25 wherein the bends in said loop sections are located at approximately the same distance from said nose projection so that said loop is provided with an enlarged distal end portion.

33. The instrument defined in claim 25 wherein the notch or dent of each one of said loop sections extends toward the other loop section.

34. The instrument defined in claim 25 wherein said loop lies in a single plane, said notches or dents being located in said plane.

35. The instrument defined in claim 25 wherein said loop has a relaxed configuration wherein said loop sections are spaced from one another by a loop width, each of said notches or dents having a width dimension measured in a direction from the respective loop section towards the other loop section, said width dimension being no larger than approximately fifteen percent of said loop width.

36. The instrument defined in claim 25 wherein said notches or dents each have a V shape.

37. A medical instrument comprising a snare provided with provided with at least one notch or dent for enabling use of said snare in any of a plurality of effective sizes.

38. A medical method comprising:
providing an instrument including a tubular member, an elongate member disposed at least partially inside said tubular member, and a resilient loop of a first size attached to one end of said elongate member, said loop including a bend on a side of said loop opposite said elongate member, said loop further including two loop sections each extending between said elongate

member and said bend, at least one of said loop sections being formed with at least one respective notch or dent;

inserting an endoscope into a patient, said endoscope having a biopsy channel;

inserting said instrument through said biopsy channel, said loop being disposed in said tubular member during the inserting of said instrument;

after the inserting of said endoscope and the inserting of said instrument, pushing said elongate member to eject said loop at least partially from said tubular member at a distal end of said endoscope;

using the at least partially ejected loop to encircle a first desired tissue mass of a first size inside the patient, said loop being substantially entirely outside of said tubular member during the using of said loop; and

using the at least partially ejected loop to encircle a second desired tissue mass of a second size inside the patient, said second size being substantially smaller than said first size, said loop notch or dent being initially disposed at a mouth opening of said tubular member during the using of said loop to encircle said second desired tissue mass.